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RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE 1060
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 TEGUCIGALPA 000523

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/01/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [CASC](#) [EAID](#) [ELAB](#) [ETRD](#) [PHUM](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: HONDURAN COUP SITREP #7: EVENTS AS OF 07/01/09
12:00 LOCAL (14:00 EDT)

REF: A. A. TEGUCIGALPA 521
 [1](#)B. B. TEGUCIGALPA 517 AND OTHERS

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Classified By: Ambassador Hugo Llorens, reasons 1.4 (b and d)

Country Relatively Quiet; Overnight Curfew Continued

[¶](#)1. (U) The pro-Zelaya demonstration in Tegucigalpa near the Presidential Palace in front of the Clarion Hotel concluded with minimal violence. A crowd of approximately 5,000 moved toward the OAS mission, which is located approximately three blocks south of the U.S. Embassy. There are continued reports of roadblocks on highways, some by security forces and others by anti-regime protesters, but there is still no sign of any large-scale unrest in the countryside.

[¶](#)2. (U) Authorities have announced the curfew will continue through July 3, but it has been adjusted to 22:00 to 05:00 local (24:00 to 07:00 local). Post has asked the National Police (HNP) to allow our roving security contractor to continue their patrols during curfew hours. (Note: in one case Tuesday night, a patrol was briefly stopped. End note.)

[¶](#)3. (C) DATT reported one significant security roadblock on the highway between Tegucigalpa and President Zelaya's hometown of Catacamas, Olancho, and that in the strongly pro-Zelaya town of Limones, Olancho, Zelaya supporters had control of the town.

[¶](#)4. (U) During curfew hours overnight, grenades were thrown into the premises of the Supreme Court and Radio America, but neither detonated. Security forces later detonated both grenades on-site. No injuries were reported in connection with the incidents. (Note: grenades have occasionally been used in this manner in recent years in Honduras, either in connection with criminal activity or intimidation of witnesses in criminal cases. End note)

Political Developments

15. (C) While we continue to press a firm line regarding the coup and its dangerous implications, regime leadership and the overall political community in Honduras are holding fast to the position that their actions were in defense of democracy against a would-be dictator. The July 1 Honduran newspapers are replete with defenses of the coup and opposition to any return by President Zelaya. Many cleave to the editorials in the Wall Street Journal and Florida papers as signs of softening international opinion. A handful of Congress deputies have contacted Embassy officials, however, to express their unease with the supposedly "unanimous" affirmation of the Congressional measures passed June 28. Jacobo Lagos, who formerly held such posts as Minister for Communications, Presidential Chief of Staff and HONDUTEL chief, said the Attorney General has issued a warrant for his arrest, ostensibly in connection with his HONDUTEL position, but that it is politically motivated. Embassy is looking into his statement as a matter of concern, but notes Lagos had expressed fear of prosecution to EconCouns long before June 28. We are seeking to gather further details from any and all Zelaya administration officials who claim persecution and will report our findings as they come. Attorney General Rubi reiterated his assertion to EconCouns July 1 that the only warrants issued beyond the one for President Zelaya himself are in relation to prior investigations and that Zelaya officials are safe.

16. (S) At the request of First Lady, who has been in hiding at the Zelaya ranch in Olancho, the Ambassador sent DATT with three vehicles to bring her and eight other members of the household into the capital late June 30. DATT successfully brought Mrs. Zelaya, her mother, the President's mother and the others to Tegucigalpa; Mrs. Zelaya spent the night at the

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Ambassador's residence, and may move into one of the family's homes in the Tres Caminos neighborhood today.

17. (U) The G-16 donor group met this morning to discuss the current situation. Ambassador and USAID Director attended. The local OAS discussed the OAS resolution, explaining that it gives Honduras 72 hours to restore democracy and reinstate Zelaya. The OAS will meet July 6 to determine compliance; if Honduras does not comply, a vote will ensue to suspend Honduras from the OAS with sanctions. An OAS mission to Honduras comprised of foreign ministers from the region and OAS diplomats is being planned. That mission will meet with political players, including religious leaders, but will not meet with representatives of the regime or with congressional leaders. While all members condemned the coup and have suspended engagement with the regime, most are currently taking a wait and see attitude regarding the formal suspension of assistance.

Infrastructure and Communications

18. (U) Toncontin and San Pedro Sula airports remain open for international flights, and American, Continental and Delta airlines continue to operate flights as usual. TACA continues to have difficulties as a result of an unrelated commercial dispute. As reported above, some roadblocks exist, but former PolCouns successfully traveled overland southward to El Salvador today without incident or delay en route. Land borders with Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua remain closed to commercial traffic, but tourist vehicles, including buses, are crossing unhindered.

19. (U) Utilities are functioning at normal levels, and almost all television and radio broadcasts are back to normal, except for strongly pro-Zelaya Channel 36, which remains off the air.

Consular and Embassy Operations

¶10. (U) The Embassy is open for emergency services to Amcits only for the remainder of the work week. Embassy offices have returned to normal operations otherwise, with a liberal leave policy in place for employees who feel unsafe getting to the Embassy; no such cases have been reported, however, and personnel have expressed relief to get back to work. The planned celebration for Mission personnel and the broader Amcit community for July 4 at the Agriculture Institute in Zamorano has been cancelled.

¶11. (U) The Consular Section has received welfare and whereabouts inquiries on 400 Amcits to date via telephone and email. Post has drafted a new warden message to be issued as soon as it is cleared, and has determined one message update per day will be sufficient. Consular Section continues to regularly update ACS talking points on the Embassy website, and has advised Amcits to abide by the curfew.

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